

sphere of encouragement of settlement. That Act has now been in operation for something like twenty months. Naturally at first those taking advantage of it were few, but as time went on a considerable number have come under its provisions, until at the present time the exact figures total 2,156, of whom only 90 have abandoned the land. To some of those—by no means to all—loans have been advanced, and as time went on it became apparent that the area of available land suitable for agriculture still left unhomesteaded in the western country was going to be insufficient to permit the Soldier Settlement Board, established under that Act, to meet the demand or, indeed, to engage on any very extensive settlement afterwards.

As a consequence, the necessity arose of launching upon some scheme whereby lands that had been already alienated from the Crown and were lying unused in the various districts of the country in all the provinces should be acquired and made available for entry by these returned men. It was necessary that some such scheme should be devised, and we were then confronted with the question as to whether or not the Dominion Government should assume the responsibility of administering such duties as the acquirement of private land and the supervision of it within the boundaries of the provinces. That was a question fraught with very considerable difficulty. It would appear to many, and did appear—indeed, we were urged by many—that as the lands were private lands and as civil rights and the administration of matters connected with civil rights were by constitution a provincial responsibility, and, indeed, could be better handled by the provinces which were nearer to the scene of activities, we should enter into some co-operative scheme with the provinces whereby on the receipt of Dominion assistance actual administrative duties would be performed provincially. We were encountered, however, by a determined attitude on the part of the provincial governments, particularly in the West, against the assumption of any responsibility for settlement by returned soldiers, they taking the ground that in so far as soldiers were concerned the original line of demarcation between provincial and Dominion duties should be altered, and that as to soldiers the entire responsibility should be federally assumed.

That was, more determinedly, the attitude of the provinces; their attitude being explained, on their part at all events, by the fact that the federal lands were still

held by the Federal Government. However, all argued that in so far as the soldier was concerned, the Dominion should assume the responsibility.

Under those conditions there seemed no course open to us but to venture upon a very much wider field and to launch upon a great scheme of settlement such as I think no federal authority had ever launched upon before. Accordingly, on the 11th day of February last, an Order in Council was passed under the War Measures Act, the necessity being upon us, in view of the earlier armistice that had been declared and the fast returning men. An Order in Council was passed whereby the Minister of the Interior, or, rather, the board under the Minister of the Interior, was given authority to acquire privately owned lands and to sell these privately owned lands to settlers as defined by the Soldiers' Settlement Act, 1917.

In Australia, where they have conditions paralleling ours in many respects, these duties have been undertaken by the state authorities and a system of co-operation has been worked out, complicated in many ways; but this was the system adopted there for the reason that they did not feel that the fact that the men were soldiers altered in any degree the division of constitutional duties that had been outlined in the Imperial Act creating the Commonwealth of Australia.

In Canada, however, we have, as I say, under all the circumstances, decided that it was the duty of the federal authorities. Indeed, it was imperative that this great task be not receded from, that some one undertake it; consequently we undertook it and our first step was the passing of the Order in Council of the 11th February last. Under the terms of that Order in Council the Soldier Settlement Board was empowered to acquire in any province of the Dominion privately owned lands and to sell to any individual returned man as defined by the Soldiers' Settlement Act, a not greater acreage than 320 acres, with the provision that the land should be sold at the price at which it had been acquired, and that the amount owed by the returned man on the land should not exceed \$4,500, he paying 10 per cent, as the minimum percentage, of the cost. It was also provided that the board should have power to acquire stock and implements and to sell the stock and implements also at cost to these men, \$2,000 being the maximum allowed to each, and to loan to a man upon his improvements, or upon improvements to be made, a sum not ex-